



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FACT SHEET

North Birmingham Environmental Collaboration Project

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INTRODUCTION

The Region 4 Office of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will use a multi-media approach that includes the EPA Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Superfund, Air, and Water Divisions to address environmental issues in the Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park and North Birmingham communities

EPA will continue to provide information to ensure that the community, local, state, and federal officials are informed and aware of the EPA's response activities, as well as provide opportunities for involvement.

BACKGROUND

EPA is currently addressing residential neighborhoods surrounding the Walter Coke facility and at the Walter Coke facility itself, in a multi-media manner with the involvement of RCRA, Superfund, Air and Water programs. The Walter Coke facility is regulated under RCRA, the Clean Water Act (CWA), and the Clean Air Act (CAA). RCRA intends to enter an Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent (AOC) to address compliance issues identified on the Walter Coke property.

EPA conducted a multi-media inspection of the Walter Coke facility in the fall of 2011 and is currently evaluating those findings.

The Air Division is conducting a Pilot Community Air Toxics Initiative in North Birmingham. The local government and communities in the area have expressed concerns regarding safety and health impacts, sampling of residential soil for contamination, as well as ongoing and historical releases of contamination to the air, soil and water.

SUPERFUND DIVISION UPDATE

EPA has determined that certain areas surrounding the Walter Coke facility meet the criteria for a time critical removal action. EPA is conducting a search for potentially responsible parties (PRPs). EPA will pursue a settlement agreement with Walter Coke and other industries identified as PRPs that will include environmental assessments and/or cleanup activities at community properties.

RCRA DIVISION UPDATE

The RCRA Corrective Action/Cleanup Program is focusing on the "inside-the-fence line" Walter Coke environmental areas of concern.

Upcoming activities include the following:

- Continue to address on-site areas requiring further environmental attention at the 400-acre Walter Coke facility; and
- Draft a Cleanup Order negotiated with Walter Coke to ensure the environment and public health are protected.

The RCRA Division will continue to keep the community engaged and informed on issues relating to on-site assessment and cleanup activities.

AIR DIVISION UPDATE

The Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) and EPA will conclude the year-long North Birmingham Pilot Community Air Toxics Initiative in the Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park, and North Birmingham communities in the summer of 2012. A risk assessment, based on data collected from the study, will be prepared and made available to the public in the fall of 2012.

Periodic updates will be provided to the community regarding the progress of the Pilot

Air Toxics Study. EPA and JCDH will provide workshops and discussion opportunities for the community on topics of interest, including asthma, radon, air permitting, mold, lead, and risk assessment.

During 2012, EPA will partner with several agencies to offer education and outreach activities to youth at public schools, daycares, and head start centers in North Birmingham.

WATER DIVISION UPDATE

The Water Division's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Section overviews and comments on surface water discharge permits written by the State of Alabama (Alabama Dept. of Environmental Management [ADEM]) and also performs enforcement inspections. In coordination with ADEM, EPA is working to address any point source discharges that may impact water quality of the receiving water body.

The Walter Coke facility has a NPDES permit (number AL0003247) for the discharge of various treated process wastewaters, storm water runoff, treated sanitary wastewater, and treated groundwater from Arichem LLC to Five Mile Creek, which is classified as "Fish and Wildlife" at the point of discharge from the plant. This classification is intended to preserve aquatic life from adverse environmental impacts

The NPDES permit contains technology-based limits based on the effluent guidelines as well as water-quality based limits. Parameters addressed in the permit include metals, organic substances and nutrients that are present in the discharge and that might affect fish and other aquatic life in Five Mile Creek. The current permit expires in November 2014, at which time the facility will have to apply for a new permit.

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